

# MiraCosta College Academic Senate guidance for camera use in synchronous instruction and assessment

During the Covid-19 pandemic, MiraCosta College adopted a flexible cameras-on approach to synchronous online learning that centered respect for privacy, access, and equity when students had no choice but to continue their education in Zoom. Now, when students have multiple modality options for classes including in-person, asynchronous online, synchronous online, hybrid, and HyFlex classes, this commitment is being updated to support instructional engagement, attendance expectations, and academic integrity in synchronous online environments.

- Under normal circumstances, for course sections scheduled as HyFlex, synchronous online, or hybrid sections which include synchronous online instruction, or asynchronous online sections which include flexibly scheduled synchronous assessments or meetings as described in the class schedule, cameras on throughout the class session should be considered the default expectation.
  - The class schedule notes in SURF and the syllabus must indicate that students are required to have a reliable camera and must expect to keep the camera on as the default when attending class sessions, assessments, or meetings. The class schedule should also include technology loan information.
  - Faculty have discretion to allow cameras off as they deem appropriate, for example, if there are technology concerns for the student, or unexpected health, family, or work situations arise where privacy and/or safety may be a concern.
  - Faculty are encouraged to consider circumstances if students express a need for their camera to be off. A class policy about how camera use can impact student attendance must be included on the syllabus.
  
- Should the college be forced into emergency remote instruction, cameras should be presumptively optional for course sections that switch to the synchronous online modality, and faculty must:
  - Consider alternatives to video such as audio and chat participation
  - Encourage the use of virtual and blurred video backgrounds
  - Allow student flexibility to turn off their cameras or mute audio as needed
  - Encourage the use of the text chat feature for participation and discussion
  
- Should emergency remote instruction extend beyond one semester, courses scheduled as synchronous online due to the circumstances may require cameras on to support course curriculum content and objectives, and/or to enhance academic integrity of assessments.
  - If a camera is required to support learning and/or assessment in a scheduled online class, students will be notified of the requirement in the Class Notes in SURF as well as on the course syllabus.
  - Faculty will require cameras only when necessary for learning and assessment. The camera requirement notification in the course syllabus should clearly identify

the essential need for live video during class time and consider student privacy concerns and technical barriers.

- When possible, faculty are encouraged to create a confidential opt-out opportunity that allows the student to request an alternative to video participation.
- Except in unusual circumstances, department chairs should not make all sections of a course require cameras-on to ensure students have a choice and students who can't adhere to the requirements still have course options.

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This document was approved by the MiraCosta College Academic Senate on May 1, 2026.

This document replaces the original version, ***MiraCosta College commitment to equitable use of cameras in online instruction and assessment***, which was developed by a MiraCosta workgroup in 2021, and was adapted from Palomar College's Cameras-On policy approved by the Palomar Faculty Senate on 2/1/2021.